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2261 Harvard Ave.,
Montreal, Que.
October 7, 1969

Mr. Michael Sheldon,
Assistant to the Principal,
Sir George Williams University,
Maisonneuve Blvd.,
Montreal, Que.

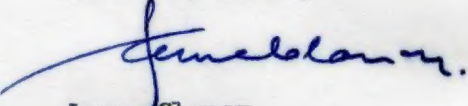
Dear Mr. Sheldon:

As you know from our telephone conversations, I had tentatively scheduled a meeting for Tuesday, October 14 at which representatives of various organizations could be informed of the circumstances surrounding the February 11, 1969 affair.

I have found it impossible to get all those interested in this matter together on this date so in the interim I should appreciate it if you would look over the enclosed statement of the student position and let me have any comments you may have regarding it.

Because of the limited time available if we are to exert any influence, I would appreciate it if you would give this your immediate attention.

Sincerely yours,


James Clancy

JC/gap
Encl.

The Sir George Williams University Issue.

In order that we may understand the full implications of the conflict it is essential that we try to make a humane effort to extricate ourselves from our personal and societal prejudices. This first step will help us to assess objectively the facts associated with the issue and trace a pattern of behaviour which coincided with racial polarisation.

To trace in chronological order the events that led to the racial confrontation on February 11 1969 would be valuable and essential for a comprehensive understanding of the conflict. However, a document of this brevity can only deal with an analysis of the main events as they relate to the present situation. It is hoped that such an analysis will enable individuals and organizations to at least develop an interest in the case and direct their concern in a constructive manner towards providing some assistance even if only on humanitarian grounds.

The conflict began as early as April 1968, when six Black Students, realising that they were being discriminated against by a biology professor (Anderson) in a course (Physiology 431), lodged an official complaint to the Dean of Students, Magnus Flyn. Dean Flyn realised that the charges were serious and advised that the evidence be documented and presented to Dean Madras (science). The students then met with Madras, who again reiterated that the charges were serious. Madras then called the chairman of the Biology Department, Dr. McLeod to inform him of the complaint. It was later disclosed that in effect Madras and McLeod had met earlier to discuss the charges and without consulting the students, decided that

the charges were invalid and nothing further should be done about it

On April 30 1968 the students (by then beginning to get frustrated with this run-around game) started the circle moving again by returning to the Dean of Students, Magnus Flyn. This time, though Flyn, the administration arranged a meeting with the students, Anderson, Madras and McLeod. This meeting lasted five hours and Madras made it clear that "Perry Anderson was not the worse one around here." It is the duty of the University (administration and faculty) to protect the rights of all people within its community. If a complaint is launched to the head of the department or to the dean of a faculty, or to the administration, it necessarily follows that these individuals or bodies should act objectively in the best interest of the conflicting parties. However, at this meeting a pattern was set which was to underpin all further relationship between the students and the faculty or administration. During the course of this meeting, Madras and McLeod acted as council for Anderson against the students. We must not forget that these two gentlemen were the ones responsible for impartially dealing with the charges and recommending a course of action based on their findings.

At the end of this five hour meeting Madras took the telephone numbers of two students, saying: "gentlemen, I will look into this fully and you will be notified as soon as a decision has been reached." Between May 1968 and December 1968 the students were not contacted. In point of fact, Anderson was promoted during the summer of 1968. Upon investigation the students were told that the minutes of this meeting were lost in the internal mail. Students, beginning Physiology 431 in September 1968 were introduced to similar pressures from Anderson. This, coupled with the lack

of effective action from the Dean of Science (Madras), Students (Flynn) and the chairman of the Sociology Department McLeod lead the students to approach the administration directly through Principal Rae. It was then decided that an impartial committee would be set up, agreeable to all sides, to listen and assess charges against Anderson. The administration went ahead and set up a committee without the consent of the students. The students objected to the formation and composition of the committee, particularly because one of the members, Prof. Abbott was a member of the Biology Department and a personal friend of Anderson.

After continued consultation and further treachery on the part of the administration, Principal Rae, unable to withstand the pressure, tendered his resignation. His departure did not change the attitude of the administration. The administration, by then, fully realised that if the charges of racism against Anderson were upheld by an impartial committee, the implications of this finding would reflect unfavourably, not only on the professor involved, but on the entire university. But still further, the university within this society occupies a respectable position as an institution of higher learning and a primary vehicle of social change. If it is proven that rampant and blatant racism exist at this level, there would be an obvious unfavourable reflection on the Canadian society in general. It was with this in mind that the administration, with advice from the Board of Governors sought to appoint a committee that would go through the formality of a hearing and then find Anderson innocent.

Early problems arose with the first committee, as political position became polarised on Campus along racial lines. Two Black professors on this committee felt that they were too directly involved with the Black students to be impartial in seriously assessing the evidence against Anderson. They resigned as honourable men. Professor Marsden also resigned because he felt, that as president of the university teacher's association, there was a conflict of interest.

A new committee was appointed with the full consent of Anderson, without consultation with the students. The students reminded the administration of an earlier commitment, in which it was agreed that the hearing committee would be selected by the administration, the students and Anderson. Such a method of selection would constitute some level of impartiality.

Ignoring student protest, the hearing committee made it clear through the "impartial" chairman, Adamson, that the committee would meet anyway, whether the students came or not, they would find Anderson innocent, "wipe his slate clean" and then lay charges against the students.

Meanwhile, the students went to Dean O'Brien's office to investigate into the contents of a letter, signed by the Dean, addressed to Anderson, in which he told the latter that the Black students could resort to violence if Anderson returned to teach from voluntary suspension. The students felt that this implication of violence was unfounded and requested a copy of the letter from the Dean. O'Brien first said, he knew nothing of the letter. After further questioning he admitted having written a letter but there was no reference to violence. The persistency of the students paid off when O'Brien produced the letter and, as

expected, the reference to violence was there. O'Brien was asked to apologize in writing, for lying to the students. He did this with little difficulty in the presence of Adamson. Two days after this event, Adamson forced O'Brien to take legal action against the students. Warrants were issued for the arrest of Kennedy Frederick and Errol Thomas on charges of extortion and kidnaping. From that point the university tried to use these two charges as bargaining lever with the students. "If you drop charges of racism against Anderson, we will drop the criminal charges against the two Black students." Such a puerile attempt at bureaucratic hegemony and racial intimidation was clearly not in keeping with the rights of Black people to self-determination in 1969.

The students were determined to secure justice, even if it meant going to court to face charges for crimes they did not commit.

The hearing committee met under the chairmanship of Adamson, the principal witness in the O'Brien case against two Black students, one of who (Kennedy Frederick) was among the six laying charges against Anderson. Also included on the committee, was Marsden who, by the had resigned his position as president of the University Teacher's Association, which, in his words, enabled him to be impartial.

It was out of this insult to the students, that the confrontation escalated. The students continued without success to demand a new, impartial committee, agreeable to all parties. In an attempt to influence the administration and student body in general, the students broke up the second hearing of this committee and four hundred Black and White students moved into the computer center on the ninth floor of the university. After one week of peaceful occupation, three hundred white students took

over the faculty club on the seventh floor in support of the Black students' call for justice (an impartial committee, agreeable to all parties). When it was realized that the administration was going to remain adamant in their refusal for a new committee and such a situation would only escalate the conflict into further confrontation, a telegram was sent to Education Minister Jean Guy Cardinal, asking him to exercise his right under Section 93 of the BNA to bring about a solution. Mr. Cardinal, who had been involved in a program of educational assistance between Quebec and French speaking African countries (Gabon), said this was an internal matter and he could not act.

On the twelfth day of occupation, the lawyers, representing the students and university, got together and an agreement was drawn up in an attempt to end the crisis. The students accepted a compromise in the general interest of bringing about a solution, agreeable to all parties of the dispute. This document called for the foundation of a new committee, where the students appointed two people, Anderson appointed two people, and a fifth to be appointed by the university, that was mutually acceptable.

The students signed the document and felt the crisis was over. However, the university refused to sign this document that their own lawyer had negotiated on their behalf. This refusal was precisely what lead to further escalation - 400 riot police, armed with clubs, fire axes, rifles, revolvers, tear gas, etc. were sent by the administration to eject 97 unarmed students. During the course of this confrontation, the students were beaten, some of them severely and the computer center was destroyed. As expected, the unarmed students were charged with conspiracy to commit

damage and committing damage etc. The armed police are being used in court to give evidence against those unarmed students. While, all students face similar charges and no one has a criminal record, the average bail for 52 White students is \$ 1,500.00; while for the 45 Black students it is \$5,000.00 plus passports. The confiscation of passports implies that Black students, while awaiting trial are unable to return home. There is no need to stress that students are unable to find jobs.

Judging from the attitude of the courts during the preliminary hearings the students are assumed guilty before a trial. The sham committee went on with a hearing without evidence from the complaining students and as expected, found the biology professor innocent. The publication of such a report before trial was clearly meant to further prejudice public opinion and the jurors against the students.

The students responded again in a search of the truth by charging (July 14) the chairman of the sham committee, Professor Adamson with intellectual dishonesty and challenged him to meet anywhere, anytime, with Rosie Douglas in a public debate. If Canada is a just, democratic society, the university a place of truth and learning would accept such a challenge. But under the circumstances, the university is determined to see the students jailed and this can be readily accomplished if they can continue to hide the truth from the public. The university, through Professor Compton (English Department) have said that their position is right but they would hurt their case in an open debate. The reason being the articulate style of the Black students. Result : no debate -keep the facts hidden from the Canadian people.

Two students, Rosie Douglas and Edmond Michael met with Foreign Minister Mitchel Sharp in August to discuss the need for a full investigation of the case. Mr. Sharp argued that the case before the court deals specifically with criminal charges arising out of February 11, but will not deal with the Anderson case and in effect the events that lead up to February 11. He, however, construed that the federal government could not initiate a committee to investigate the entire case. Such a responsibility, though necessary, belongs to the provincial government. He further agreed that the outcome of this case could very well affect Canada - Caribbean relations and an investigation would help to clear the air. Later the provincial government reiterated their stand that this case was a "hot potato" and they would not touch it. The students stressed the fact that while Canada was extracting several hundred million dollars annually from the Caribbean, the Federal and Provincial Governments will not as much as even risk an investigation in the search of truth for fear that such findings could affect the false image of Canada (no racism).

It is therefore easier to sacrifice the lives of 87 students. In point of fact, the communications media have already mislead the Canadian people by condemning the students before their trial begins.

The students are hoping that freedom-loving Canadian people will take some time to examine the facts of the case and ask themselves some serious questions. The governments (federal and provincial), in cooperation with the board of governors at Sir George are determined to avoid an investigation or any face to face confrontation with the students, where, in a democratic manner, the facts would be aired.

The just society cannot become a reality when the very basis of democracy, freedom of speech and social justice are continuously being denied to the Black students in this case and to non-white people collectively (Canadian Indian). This is a time for every one of us to appeal objectively to our own consciences for guidance, It is only then, that we can determine what we can do individually or collectively to help resolve this racial crisis.

AFTER ALL, IT IS CANADIAN JUSTICE THAT IS ON TRIAL !